



## Important Fact For Prelims (8th March 2019)

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### I-STEM

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- The web portal “**Indian Science, Technology and Engineering Facilities Map (I-STEM)**” has been developed by the **Centre for Nano Science and Engineering (CeNSE)** at the **Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru**.
- I-STEM portal will enable **easy and timely access of resources** to researchers working anywhere in the country.
- The portal is funded by **Office of Principal Scientific Advisor to the Prime Minister Office** also gives access to monitoring agencies including the Department of Science and Technology to evaluate how much the equipment funded by them are being used.
- In the future, private laboratories and universities will also be included in the database, which could also benefit start-ups.

### Prime Minister’s Science, Technology and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC)

- The **PM-STIAC (Science, Technology, Innovation Advisory Committee)**, was **constituted in August, 2018** to advise the Prime Minister on all matters related to S&T, innovation and monitor the implementation as well.
- It is a **21-member committee, chaired by Principal Scientific Advisor (PSA) to the Government, presently K Vijay Raghavan**.
  - **Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam** was the first **PSA from 1999—2001** and **Dr. R. Chidambaram** from **2001-2018**.
  - Professor K. VijayRaghavan succeeded Dr. Chidambaram on April 3, 2018.
- **PM-STIAC replaced the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) to PM and Cabinet.**

### GI Tag for Erode Turmeric

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- The Geographical Indication Registry of India has granted **GI Tag to Erode manjal (Turmeric) under Spices Category (Class 30 of GI Classification)**.
- Erode Turmeric has been granted tag because of its **uniqueness in terms of its size**,

**color, quality and its resistance to pests after boiling.**

- With the GI Tag, turmeric cultivated in some districts of Erode, parts of Coimbatore and whole of Tirupur (Tamil Nadu) will be recognised for its unique qualities derived from its place of origin.
- Erode turmeric is a **rhizome, both finger and bulb obtained from the Erode local cultivar**. It is grown in **hot moist conditions with temperature ranging from 20 degrees to 37.9 degrees Celsius** with an average of 600 to 800 mm rainfall in a year.
- It is a commercial spice crop which is sown in the months of June-July and is harvested in the months from January to March.

## Renewable Status For Large Hydro Power Projects

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- The government, under **New Hydroelectricity Policy**, has approved 'renewable energy status' for large hydel projects. **Earlier, only smaller projects of less than 25 MW** in capacity were **categorised as renewable energy**.
- Large hydro projects will now be included as a separate category **under the non-solar renewable purchase obligation policy**, mandating power purchasers to source a portion of electricity from such projects.
- The debt repayment period for hydro projects has been increased to 18 years from current 12 years with the provision to introduce an escalating tariff of 2%.
- The policy also provides for additional funds separately for infrastructure development as well as separate funds for the costs of flood moderation.
- These measures have been taken to **reduce hydro power tariff** and make the sector more competitive.
- According to the government, India has a hydro-power potential of 1,45,320 MW, of which only about 45,400 MW has been utilised so far. Only about 10,000 MW of hydro-power has been added in the last 10 years.
- Also, the share of hydro-power in the total generation capacity has declined from 50.36% in the 1960s to around 13% in 2018-19.

## Renewable Purchase Obligation

- Renewable Purchase Obligation refers to the **obligation imposed by law** on some entities to either buy electricity generated by specified 'green' sources, or buy, in lieu of that, **'renewable energy certificates (RECs)'** from the market.
- The 'obligated entities' are mostly electricity distribution companies and large consumers of power. RECs are issued to companies that produce green power, who opt not to sell it at a preferable tariff to distribution companies.

## Rebate on Embedded taxes for Garments Exports

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- The Union Cabinet has approved a scheme to **rebate State and Central Embedded**

### **Taxes for apparels and made-ups exports.**

- **At present**, apparel and made-ups segments are supported under the **Scheme for Rebate of State Levies (RoSL)**.
- However, certain State, as well as Central Taxes, continued to be present in the cost of exports. Cabinet decision provides for a scheme to rebate all embedded State and Central Taxes/levies for apparel and made-ups which have a combined share of around 56% in India's textile export basket.
- It is applicable for apparel and made-ups now and will be extended to yarn in the future.

### **Benefits**

- The proposed measures are expected to **make the textile sector competitive**.
- Rebate of all Embedded State and Central taxes/levies for apparel and made-ups segments **would make exports zero-rated, thereby boosting India's competitiveness in export markets** and ensure equitable and inclusive growth of textile and apparel sector.

### **RoSL**

- It is to **offset indirect taxes levied by states such as stamp duty, petroleum tax, electricity duty and mandi tax** that were **embedded in exports**,
- It is provided to **textiles exporters**.

### **Made-ups**

These are articles manufactured or stitched from any type of cloth, other than a garment such as bed-sheets, cushion covers, lamp-shades etc.

### **Divestment of CPSEs**

- The Union Cabinet has decided to authorize the **Finance Minister-led Alternative Mechanism (AM)** to decide on strategic disinvestments.
- Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has **empowered the AM — set up in 2017** to look into the strategic sale of Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs).
- AM has to decide on:
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  - The mode of sale and the final pricing of the transaction, or lay down the principles/guidelines for such pricing,
  - Selection of strategic partner/buyer, and the terms and conditions of sale,
  - It can also decide on the timing of the sale and any other related issue regarding the transaction.

### **Disinvestment**

- Disinvestment **means selling of assets.** In the case of Public Sector Undertakings, disinvestment means Government selling/ diluting its stake (share) in PSUs in which it has a majority holding.
- Disinvestment is **carried out as a budgetary exercise,** under which the government announces yearly targets for disinvestment for selected PSUs.